

Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Parks & Recreation Joint Task Force June 2014 Report



Lake Forest Members:

- Tighe Magnuson, Co-Chair
- Mike Adelman
- Dan Jasica
- Peter Schaefer

Support Staff:

- Ed Heiser, Lake Bluff
- Sally Swarthout, Lake Forest

Lake Bluff Members:

- Chris Mosbarger, Co-Chair
- Brock Gordon
- Al Trefts, Jr.
- Niki Walsh

Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Parks & Recreation Scope of Services



Area/Activity	
Population (2012)	19,349
People Served (i.e. registered)	8,510 units program participation
Programs Offered	1,268
Revenue (2013)	\$9,679k
Capital Ex	\$4,486k for 5 Yrs.
Golf Round/Members (2013)	29,920/398
Special Event Attendees (est.)	21,290
Park Land (acres)	279
Facility Buildings	6
Beach Pavilions	3
Park Pavilions	5

Area/Activity	
Population (2012)	7,460 (includes Knollwood)
People Served (i.e. registered)	6,200 units program participation
Programs Offered	720
Revenue (2013)	\$7,184k
Capital Ex	\$5,100k for 10 yrs.
Golf Rounds/Members (2013)	26,881/229
Special Event Attendees (est.)	Not Available
Park Land (acres)	170
Facility Buildings	9
Beach Pavilions	2
Park Pavilions	3

Executive Summary

- First, a thank you to the Mayor of City of Lake Forest and the President of the Lake Bluff Park District and their respective staffs for the opportunity for our citizen task force to work on this project
- Why Parks & Recreation Task Force?
 - Initiated Fall 2013 at Request of the Mayor of City of Lake Forest and Board of Commissioners of Lake Bluff Park District Board
 - Broad Commission to Explore Synergies
 - Assistance from Respective Parks & Recreation Personnel
- 4 Lake Forest and 4 Lake Bluff residents met monthly (10 times total) beginning October 2013 to review potential synergies between Lake Forest Parks & Recreation and Lake Bluff Park District
- Primary take-aways: 1) both operations operating lean; 2) opportunity for greater reciprocity of services between the two communities; 3) more transparency of operations between the two entities going forward

Summary of Resolution—Task Force Work Areas

Resolution:

- Desire to collectively explore opportunities related to shared services, capital and land use that will lead to greater efficiencies and enhancements for the benefit of the residents
- Seek to collaborate on capital opportunities to maximize financial benefits of services where desirable
- Encourage dialogue related to exploring capital, land use and opportunities for shared services that will permit the continuance to deliver quality recreation services in the face of challenging economic times

Focus area of task force, desire to promote reciprocity w/o significant loss of revenue

Not readily apparent that there are significant synergies/savings. More detailed internal review required

Further follow up by respective park personnel

Summary Observations

- Currently both respective parks and recreations operating lean; roughly breakeven (i.e. revenue/costs about same)
- Not significant low hanging \$ savings
- Share programs where opportunities lie
 - E.g. reciprocity between towns to promote greater usage/revenue
- Golf course operations need further review:
 - Consistent with industry trends, rounds have been down at both courses (Note: combined 57,000 rounds in 2013 vs. each course capacity of 36,000 (72,000 combined))
 - Need to monitor industry trends to determine if this is low end of demand cycle or permanent reduction in demand
 - Deerpath GC, if not used for recreational purposes, reverts to Dick family
 - Portions of both golf courses are in flood plain which limits alternative uses; likely push back from communities to develop (residential/commercial) any portion of courses
- Capital needs
 - Does not appear to be much crossover
 - Like items (e.g. roofing) should be bid together by both communities at same time to leverage savings

Task Force Focus Areas

- Initial Efforts Focused on Learning About Respective Parks & Recreation Operations
- Spent Some Time Analyzing Numbers—Some Difficulty to Get “Apples to Apples” Comparison
- Determined There Were 4 Primary Areas to Focus:
 - Programs
 - Aquatic Facility
 - Beach
 - Golf
- Assigned Two Task Force Members (1 From Each Community) To Each Focus Area for Further Work
- Findings/Recommendations Follow

Programs Subcommittee

Recommendations:

- Reciprocal use with no LF/LB non-resident fees
 - Foster more usage/interaction between communities
 - Impact: LF: \$15k in Non-Resident fees pd by LB residents , LB: \$5k in Non-Resident fees pd by LF residents)
 - Possibly offset \$20k in Non-Resident fees by increased usage (supported by greater awareness/marketing)
- Super Pass concept—i.e. tbd premium to be able to use “neighbor” facility
 - E.g. Fitness Center—10 ticket punch for \$50?
 - Allow LF/LB fitness center members to use at either location
- Investigate brochure consolidation (2015 timeframe)
 - Initially thought cost reduction; however, cost may increase due to larger size (e.g. staple binding vs. glue binding, higher mailing costs)
 - Only do if cost neutral or better to today’s cost
 - Combine online registration systems into one? Investigate after Lake Forest Parks & Recreation software selected/implemented in 2014
- Combine programs—e.g. youth basketball, dance (to explore space availability) for greater usage

Programs Subcommittee

Staff Review/Response on Impact of Expanded Reciprocity between Programs
(and endorsed by Task Force)

PROGRAMMING		
Current Reciprocation: Yes.		
	ENHANCEMENTS	CHALLENGES
USER IMPACT	Increased variety and opportunities.	Capacity issues.
	Increase quality of programming.	Registration timing.
	Fewer program cancellations.	Increase workload on staff.
	Provide diversity of programs, people and skill levels.	Communication between staffs.
	Access to unique programming opportunities.	Potential confusion of the residents on use of reciprocity
	Increase friendship base.	
	Community sharing of facilities and parks.	
REVENUE IMPACT	Increase of space with combined programming.	Negative revenue impacts due to space and student restrictions.
COST IMPACT		Increase in supplies and equipment.
		Increase staffing expenses.
		Depreciation of equipment.

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Aquatic Facility Subcommittee

Recommendations:

- Need to further research revenue impact: Track / record daily passes by address to more accurately assess revenue impact of LF / Non-Residents Aquatic Facility use. (In 2013 – if we converted LF Resident Season Passes to Resident Rates, would have resulted in loss of **\$11.7k** in revenue.)
- Record attendance numbers by hour to better determine peak times.
- Survey LF residents to determine level of interest in Aquatic Facility; then explore opportunities to offer resident rates for LF residents during off-peak times. Seasonal & Daily.
- Explore the willingness / interest of LF Rec to have joint responsibility/stewardship of Aquatic Facility and share in maintaining a high quality Aquatic Facility offering for both communities.
- Research possibility of a super joint resident pass – TBD premium membership for all facilities: Aquatic Facility, beach, paddle & both golf courses.

Aquatic Facility Subcommittee

Staff Review/Response on Impact of Expanded Reciprocity between Programs
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POOL		
Current Reciprocation: None.		
	ENHANCEMENTS	CHALLENGES
USER IMPACT	Increased water opportunities – LF Residents.	Traffic flow.
	Resident rates for swim lessons – LF Residents.	Locker room capacity.
	Swim instruction programming for Lake Forest programs.	Weekday afternoons are near capacity. Weekends in July also very crowded.
	Increased exposure for Lake Bluff programming.	
	Strengthens community.	
REVENUE IMPACT	Increase quantities of daily fee and season pass sales.	Loss of Non-Res revenue for aquatic programming.
COST IMPACT	Elimination of access fees for Lake Forest camps.	Deprecation of equipment. Overcrowding with too many camps in pool.
	Cost sharing opportunities for capital expenditures.	Increase of lifeguard and maintenance staff.
		Increase in general operational expenses.

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Beach Subcommittee

Recommendations:

- Pursue joint training and cross-training of LB/LF lifeguards, allowing shared use if needed
- Parking continues to be the problem that makes beach access reciprocity difficult
- Summer 2014—track usage by respective communities at each beach to determine how much crossover currently. If feasible (i.e. loss of revenue) consider walk-in/bike-in only reciprocal use of beaches during weekdays starting in 2015
- If one beach is open and the other closed, could allow reciprocity at that time (only) for community relations purposes
- Explore opportunities to cost share on future capital equipment expenditures, such as beach grooming equipment

Beach Subcommittee

Staff Review/Response on Impact of Expanded Reciprocity between Programs (and endorsed by Task Force)

BEACH		
Current Reciprocation: None.		
	ENHANCEMENTS	CHALLENGES
USER IMPACT	Provides variety to residents.	Increased parking demands on at already at capacity facilities
	Access to power boat launch – LB Residents.	Possible overcrowding.
	Increased exposure to programing at both facilities.	Increased staffing on busy days.
	Access to dog beach – LF Residents.	
	Strengthens community.	
REVENUE IMPACT	Increase concession sales.	Loss of Non-Res revenue over 7 days – Lake Bluff.
	Increase pavilion and watercraft rentals.	Lake Bluff has never sold a Non-Res dog tag; however potential for lost revenue
	Possibly increase daily/annual fees through greater knowledge of basin and launch.	Loss of Non-Res revenue on weekends – Lake Forest.
	Increase storage of large sailboats.	Loss of LF Non-Res boat launch and parking revenues
COST IMPACT		Increase of lifeguard and parking staff.
		Deprecation of equipment.
		Increase in general operational expenses.



Golf Subcommittee

Recommendations:

- Short Term (for this golf season)—push to increase utilization of both courses:
 - Eliminate Non-Resident daily fees for LF/LB residents at Deerpath and Lake Bluff courses
 - Initiate 10-punch pass to be used at either golf course by LF/LB residents
 - Separate 10-punch pass for non LF/LB residents to be used at either course (at higher rate than for LF/LB residents)
- Mid-Term (by end of 2014)—start to form joint plan for courses:
 - Create joint (LF/LB residents) advisory committee working together seeking synergy opportunities
- Longer Term (2015)—determine best way(s) to operate:
 - Advisory committee appoints independent review by golf operations consultant to develop options re: feasibility of consolidating operations (i.e. revenue, costs, maintenance, etc.)
 - Option 1: Operate each golf course separately under own management (i.e. no 3rd party provider)
Note: LF Parks & Recreation currently has Kemper manage revenue for Deerpath. Lake Forest is evaluating its future management structure and City Council will make a decision in fall 2014.
 - Option 2: Operate each golf course separately under 3rd party provider
 - Option 3: Operate both golf courses on a combined basis under 3rd party provider

Golf Subcommittee

Staff Review/Response on Impact of Expanded Reciprocity between Programs (and endorsed by Task Force)

GOLF COURSE		
Current Reciprocation: Memberships, both. Daily Fees, Deerpath. Carts, both.		
	ENHANCEMENTS	CHALLENGES
USER IMPACT	Expanded cooperative event and outing opportunities.	
	Fee synergy.	
	Increased variety of golfing experience.	
	Shared membership.	
	Unified league options.	
	Reduce impact from maintenance projects.	
	Expanded instructional opportunities.	
REVENUE IMPACT	Increased revenues at Deerpath.	Decrease revenues at Lake Bluff due to reduction of LF daily fee.
	Reduce price competition.	
COST IMPACT	Reduce marketing and merchandising expenditures.	

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Overall Recommendations

- Strong transparency of operations between Lake Forest Parks & Recreations and Lake Bluff Park District personnel to create reciprocity/cost sharing (where applicable)
- It is assumed that further cost savings would likely come from a broader initiative by the City of Lake Forest, City of Lake Bluff and Lake Bluff Park District to engage in leveraging common services (i.e. personnel, police, fire, water, etc.)
- Create survey to LF/LB residents on interest by them re: reciprocity/cost sharing opportunities — depending upon response can then take action as indicated

All Recommendations Combined

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